

# Herald Union



Vol. XI, No. 9

Serving the military communities of the 104th Area Support Group

Feb. 17, 2004

## Unit readiness Army introduces two new strategies to stabilize force

By Joe Burlas  
Army News Service

While the primary goal of stabilizing Soldiers is to increase unit readiness, stabilization also supports Soldier well-being, officials said.

"We think by stabilizing the Army, where we don't move the Army every two to three years on an individual basis, but we keep people in place, develop cohesive, stable units, where spouses can work, where kids can go to school, where people can invest in homes and develop equity, stabilizes forces," said Gen. Peter Schoomaker, Army chief of staff.

"It's better for the fighting forces. It's better for the families. And, it will increase our retention," he said.

To stabilize Soldiers and their families in the near term, the Army plans to implement two strategies — Home-basing and Unit-Focused Stability, said Col. Paul Thornton,

chief of Task Force Stabilization.

Under Home-basing, all initial entry Soldiers — enlisted and officers — will remain on their initial duty-assignment installation following training for six to seven years. This allows Soldiers and their families time to grow community roots and have a known family support structure in place for those families if the Soldiers deploy, Thornton said. It also allows predictability in where they will be for a longer period than the current system permits, he said.

Home-basing does not apply to mid-term or career Soldiers, only initial-entry Soldiers, Thornton said. Nor does the initiative stop home-based Soldiers being levied for short-term assignments at other locations.

Soldiers need to know that there may be a chance they'll have to do other things — short tours in Ko-

**See Readiness on page 4**



Photo by Dennis Johnson

### 'Welcome home Dad'

Janet Anderson and her 1-year-old son Hunter wait for Capt. Matthew Anderson of the 16th Corps Support Group to return from Iraq during a homecoming event on Hanau's Hutier Kaserne Feb. 9. The unit, part of the 3rd Corps Support Command, was most recently stationed at Taji before redeploying. See pages 7, 21 and 23 for more stories and photos on homecomings.



Photo by Karl Weisel

U.S. Army Europe Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Gravens (center) praises the courage demonstrated by Spc. Matthew Knox (left) and Sgt. James T. Osaer while under attack in Baghdad, Iraq.

### USAREUR CSM praises courage

## Cav Soldiers awarded medals

By David Ruderman

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

U.S. Army Europe's senior noncommissioned officer awarded medals to two 1-1st Cavalry Soldiers in a ceremony in Hanau Feb. 12. Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Gravens pinned a Purple Heart on Sgt. James T. Osaer, and a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star with valor device on Spc. Matthew A. Knox, both from A Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, Büdingen, for their actions during an attack on their patrol in Baghdad, Iraq, June 20, 2003.

"You do not see many of these, particularly for valor," said Gravens, after pinning the Bronze Star on Knox. "That is quite an accomplishment, and I am sure it will be a significant emotional event for you for the rest of your life. ... Forever more you will be in a different category than the Soldier to the right and left of you. You have my deepest respect."

Gravens next pinned the Purple Heart on both Soldiers in a ceremony attended by unit and 104th Area Support Group leaders. "A hero of mine named John Wayne said courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway. ... I know in my short visits to Iraq there are some pretty hairy things

going on down there, and I felt a tinge of fear a time or two myself. But these gentlemen have stepped forward into dangerous situations and adversity, and done their job to the best of their ability, and they've taken wounds on behalf of their nation," said Gravens.

Knox said he and Osaer were on a two-HMWWV patrol around midnight when an Improvised Explosive Device blew up on the side of the road. "I don't remember much after that, because of shell shock I guess. We had to get out and carry him [Osaer] over to an alley because he was hurt pretty badly. They were shooting at us and then a Bradley came up," said Knox.

"We drove up on a curb after the HMWWV got hit," said Osaer. "It knocked the machine gun off. So Knox ran from where the HMWWV was parked back to the street to get the machine gun and grabbed up all the links because they got blown apart, and then he started to return fire with the 240. And then they carried me out of the HMWWV."

Osaer's left leg was badly damaged by the explosion. He has undergone treatment and expected to undergo additional surgery.

**See Cav Soldiers on page 4**

## Baumholder teen named 104th ASG Youth of the Year

By Karl Weisel

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

Four outstanding teens, representing each of the 104th Area Support Group's base support battalions, faced a panel of judges for 104th ASG Youth of the Year honors Feb. 5.

At the end of the selection board process the judges raved about the quality of

the candidates and their potential to continue excelling in the future.

"The candidates are always great kids," said James Perine, one of the judges and the 104th ASG's Army Community Service officer. "They have great ideas about what they're going to do with their lives."

With the knowledge that they had already won a \$1,000 scholarship each for being

chosen to represent their BSB, the four young people expounded on why they thought they should advance to the Installation Management Agency-Europe level of competition to be considered to go on to the national level competition sponsored by the Reader's Digest Foundation and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. As judges looked over the recommendations and essays describing their

many accomplishments and contributions to improving the overall quality of life in their communities, the candidates described their academic

**See Youth of the Year on page 3**



Kadeja Gaines



# Commentary

## Feedback: What will be your lasting impression of Iraq?



**Col. D.A. Harris**  
1st Armored Division, 4th Brigade

"The Iraqi people. Last week I had a conversation with a sheik, an educated man with a law degree. He thought the Americans had done the right thing coming to Iraq. And he said, 'You can't buy my loyalty. Friends treat friends.'"



**Spc. Jacob Ramsey**  
Headquarters and Headquarters Company,  
130th Engineer Brigade

"It's the amazing difference in paradigms we have to see the world by. Some things we take as so basic are utterly foreign to the Iraqis — what we consider to be commonplace, the way we look at the world. For us the separation of church and state is fundamental. For them it would be a great immorality."



**Capt. Breck Tarr**  
Detachment A,  
55th Personnel Service Battalion

"The mixture of people, civilians and all the different military from countries around the world. And the local workers — you never know what nationality they are."



**Capt. Manuel Wong**  
Headquarters and Headquarters Company,  
3rd Corps Support Command

"The capture of Saddam Hussein Dec. 13. I heard it from one of my Soldiers coming back from R&R. It was a great feeling because it was done on our watch."



**Capt. Gerald Mantanona**  
Headquarters and Headquarters Company,  
1st Armored Division

"The impact we made on the upcoming generation in this country so they could live in freedom."

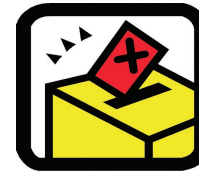
## Exercise your right to vote; cast your ballot

**By Gen. B.B. Bell**  
U.S. Army Europe commander

The federal voting season is in progress. During this general election year, the president, 34 U.S. senators, 435 members of the House of Representatives, 13 state governors and thousands of state and local officials will be elected. This year's campaign motto is "It's Your Future, Vote For It."

The U.S. Army Europe 2004 Voting Assistance Program is being implemented in the Army in Europe to help Soldiers and civilians participate in the elections. With so much of our force either committed to Operation Iraqi Freedom or on the move deploying/redeploying, we will have to work especially hard to ensure every member of the team has an opportunity to vote.

To help ensure the success of this program, commanders and other leaders must emphasize the importance of voting and facilitate the voting process in their organizations. Everyone in the chain of command, including rear detachment commanders, must



be committed to giving each Soldier, civilian, and family member an informed opportunity to cast a ballot. All personnel must understand the importance of voting as well as the procedures they need to follow in order to participate in the general election, including the primaries.

The USAREUR 2004 Voting Campaign memorandum (available on the USAREUR home page) provides more information on the USAREUR 2004 Voting Assistance Program and lists areas of concern that require our close attention during the voting season. Leaders and voting assistance officers must comply with this memorandum and are encouraged to visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at <http://www.fvap.gov> to keep informed about the voting process and upcoming elections.

The opinions of our Soldiers and civilians are important. We can help ensure their opinions are heard by supporting the USAREUR 2004 Voting Assistance Program and encouraging everyone to exercise the right to vote.

## Letters to the editor

### Thanks for fighting terrorism

Welcome home. We are very proud of each and every one of you. We're glad that you came home safely. Thank you for fighting the war against terrorism, bringing more freedom to Iraq and making our world a little bit safer. You were away from your family and friends for a long year. Alone in a strange, foreign land and culture — we're so glad you are now back from your long journey. We know you have done your duty seven days and seven nights a week — something that is not easy to do for a long year. Over the months you have lived and fought in endless hours of the searing heat. You have faced the reality of life and death in a war, where you have fought an enemy who was everywhere and nowhere. But the most important thing is you have done so much for the freedom of the Iraqi people. And for this we say thank you. God bless you all and America.

**Wilhelmine and Rudolf Aufmkolk**  
Gross Gerau, Germany

### In praise of spouses club

Have you ever wondered, "What the heck

is this BCSC thing I keep seeing signs for?" I did. As close as I could tell, a bunch of Army wives were just getting together once a month at the Rheinlander to have lunch and a gab fest. Wrong — the Baumholder Community Spouses Club does much more than that. The 125-member club sponsors many programs in the Baumholder area including the Angel Tree program. Three hundred and eighty-six children each received a present from the Angel Tree. Each term family members receive scholarship funds from the BCSC. The BCSC recently donated \$1,000 to Army Community Service. There is even a bazaar in February that BCSC is sponsoring. That isn't all the BCSC does, though. They get together once a month at the Rheinlander for lunch. The Feb. 18 luncheon will be a tea featuring a bone china vendor. There is also Polish pottery for sale and silent auctions, with more to come. Before December I had no idea even what BCSC stood for and now I'm a member. It's simple, and it's good for the community. And it's fun.

**Martha Dlugoss**  
Baumholder, Germany

## Herald Union

The Herald Union is an authorized unofficial Army newspaper published under the provisions of AR 360-1 for members of the 104th Area Support Group. Contents of the Herald Union are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. government or the Department of Defense. The editorial content is the responsibility of the 104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office. No payment will be made for contributions. This is a biweekly publication printed by The Stars and Stripes in Griesheim, Germany. Our office is in Building 1205 on Hanau's Yorkhof Kaserne. Circulation is 13,000 copies. For advertising rates contact Sean Adams at civ (06155) 601-203, mil 349-8203 or [adamss@mail.estripes.osd.mil](mailto:adamss@mail.estripes.osd.mil).

### Commander 104th Area Support Group

Col. George A. Latham II

### 104th ASG Command Sergeant Major

CSM Jose A. Fontanez

### 104th ASG Public Affairs Officer

Raino Scharck

### Newspaper staff

Editor.....Karl Weisel  
Associate Editor.....David Ruderman  
221st BSB Reporter.....Cassandra Kardeke (mil 337-5772)  
222nd BSB Reporter.....Ignacio Rubalcava (mil 485-6191)  
284th BSB Reporter.....Alexandra Williams (mil 343-6597)  
414th BSB Reporter.....Dennis Johnson (mil 322-1600)

Address: 104th ASG, Herald Union, Unit 20193 Box 0001, APO AE 09165-0001; or, Herald Union, Yorkhof Kaserne, Bldg. 1205, Chemnitzer Str. 2-4, 63452 Hanau.  
Telephone: mil 323-3257, civ (06181) 180-3257. Fax: civ (06181) 14029.  
Email: [hesherald@104asgexch.hanau.army.mil](mailto:hesherald@104asgexch.hanau.army.mil).  
Home page: [www.104thasg.hanau.army.mil](http://www.104thasg.hanau.army.mil).



# News and features

## News flash

### Herald Union journalists recognized

The *Herald Union* newspaper staff garnered 17 awards at the Installation Management Agency-Europe level 2003 Keith L. Ware Journalism Competition. First place winners will go on to represent IMA-E at the Department of the Army level competition to be held Feb. 26-27. Both the print and online versions of the *Herald Union* took first places in their categories. Other first-place winners from the 104th ASG were the 284th Base Support Battalion's **Alexandra Williams** in the News Articles category, the 104th ASG's **Anemone Rueger** in the Features category and the 222nd BSB's **Ignacio Rubalcava** in the Photojournalism category. Second-place winners included the 221st BSB's **Patricia Simoes** in Features, the 104th ASG's **Karl Weisel** in the Story Series and Stand-Alone Photograph categories, the 104th ASG's **David Ruderman** in the Moss-Holland Civilian Journalist of the Year category and the *Herald Union* staff in the Special Achievement in Print Media category for the July 8, 2003, "On Guard in Iraq" edition. Third-places were awarded to **Rubalcava** for News, **Williams** for Features, **Ruderman** for Photojournalism and volunteer **Luz Medeiros** for Contributions by a Stringer (Writer). **Pfc. Susan Newsome**, a volunteer with the 221st BSB Public Affairs Office, earned an honorable mention in the Contribution by a Stringer (Photographer) category. **Weisel** and **Ruderman** also earned honorable mentions in the Features category.

### Morale calls made easier

Deployed U.S. Army Europe Soldiers and civilians no longer have to "hurry up and wait" when trying to make a morale call to friends and family back home in Europe. They can now dial mil 314-370-1880 or 314-430-1880 and let "Mary Ann" talk them through the procedures. The 5th Signal Command has developed new automated Interactive Voice Response processing services to support people serving in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. Each system can support 240 calls an hour. Callers must dial from a touch tone phone with the capability of calling the European Defense Switch Network. (5th Signal Command Public Affairs)

### U.S. lawyer honored

American attorney Dr. Robert J. Fiore, a member of the Steuben-Schurz-Society, the USO Council of Germany and president of the Bar Association of American Lawyers in Germany was awarded the German Bundesverdienstkreuz (German Order of Merit) by Hesse Justice Minister Dr. Christean Wagner Jan. 21. Fiore, a Frankfurt-based lawyer long active both in the civilian and military legal arena, was recognized for his many years of honorary service to the cause of German-American friendship. "For his far-reaching and exemplary engagement he has earned the highest appreciation and recognition," said Wagner, during the ceremony in Wiesbaden.

### Commissary check policy

The Defense Commissary Agency has started using a new centralized commercial process to handle the collection of returned checks. The new policy eliminates the second payment attempt previously done on an individual's bank and automatically deducts the amount of the check from the customer's bank account on military paydays through the use of electronic collection. The commissary system often had to wait as long as two months to recover funds from a returned check in the past. A new brochure, "What happens if my personal check bounces at the commissary?" is available at all stores and may be requested by sending an email to [Linda.matthews@deca.mil](mailto:Linda.matthews@deca.mil). (DeCA Europe Public Affairs)



### Honing skills in Baghdad

Soldiers from Baumholder's Company B, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, prepare to enter a building during a close quarters battle drill at Butler Range, Baghdad, Iraq, Jan. 25.

Photo by Spc. Darryl T. Magby

## Youth of the Year .....

### Continued from page 1

goals, past endeavors and future ambitions.

"I love kids and I've always wanted to help people," is how the 221st BSB's Youth of the Year Jasmine Robinson explained her volunteer work at an orphanage, her reason for wanting to attend college and desire to eventually become a pediatrician. "I feel that college is necessary for people. High school prepares you for college, but college prepares you for life."

But, as there can only be one youth to represent the 104th ASG at the next level of judging, the judges were faced with narrowing down the field — comparing scores and discussing their findings. "They all are outstanding teens, or they wouldn't have made it this far," said Karen Sue Baker, of the 104th ASG's Child and Youth Services Division. "To get here they have to do volunteer work and be active in their club."

After much discussion the judges finally reached a consensus with the 222nd BSB's Kadeja Gaines emerging as this year's 104th ASG Youth of the Year winner. The judges said they were most impressed by her wide ranging involvement in community activities while still being able to maintain top-notch grades in high school.

"It was a really tight race," said Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Fontanez, the 104th ASG's senior noncommissioned officer and one of the judges.

"She's really something," said Edward Norvell, 222nd BSB Teen Program director. "She's an excellent young lady. She does a lot to help out in the community, is active in the Teen Center and is an excellent student at school. ... She's a role model for other children and would be a good role model for any person."

In addition to Gaines' many extracurricular activities, Norvell pointed out that she has contributed numerous hours volunteering to help sort mail at the community mailroom while Soldiers have been deployed. "I have nothing but good words for her," said Norvell.

"To me she's a person who takes the initiative," was how Leon Garrison, Hanau teen center director, described the 414th BSB's Youth of the Year, Amanda Tannock, age 16. "She's one of the leaders."

Tannock, active as a volunteer in her church group, as an intern at the American Forces Network Headquarters in Frankfurt and on youth soccer and softball

teams, said she would like to attend Sarah Lawrence College in New York after completing her home schooling. She also recommended that other young people get involved in their teen center and look for ways to help underwrite their undergraduate studies. "There are a ton of scholarships out there for military kids. They just need to decide where they want to go and then apply for the scholarships."

Michelle McCann, the 284th BSB's Youth of the Year, praised the skills developed and support received while being involved in her local teen center. The Giessen High School student council vice president, who plans to become an architect someday, said, "I would tell them [fellow youths] it's a good opportunity. It can help you out not only to meet new people, but in the long run to prepare for future life."

Baker, who organized the 104th ASG-level judging, said simply by attempting to earn the prestigious honor, candidates were acquiring valuable skills. "The public speaking alone will help them get along in their lives. They also learn to get along better with others."

As the 104th ASG's Youth of the Year, Gaines advances to the IMA-E level to compete against youths from all over Europe for the chance to win additional scholarship money, savings bonds and possibly attend the national level event. Students have to be either a junior or senior to qualify for scholarships.

Last year's National Youth of the Year, Mieasha Hicks, a member of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Toledo, Ohio, earned a \$10,000 scholarship for winning at the national level and a \$5,000 scholarship for earning the Midwest regional title.



Photo by Karl Weisel

Members of the 104th ASG Youth of the Year selection panel interview 414th BSB Youth of the Year Amanda Tannock.



# News and features

## NTVs: Beware of misusing government vehicles for unauthorized activities

By Capt. Jon M. Stanfield  
Wiesbaden Trial Defense Service

Many government employees have occasion to leave their office to conduct official business on another installation or even on the German economy. Using a government owned non-tactical vehicle can often be the most cost-effective and convenient means to conduct such business.

An NTV is any Department of Defense sedan, station wagon, carryall, van or bus considered "non-tactical." Many different rules and restrictions apply to their use. An NTV may be used only for official purposes and when regularly scheduled shuttle bus service or public transportation is not available or cost-effective. This includes authorized DoD functions, activities, operations and certain temporary duties. Commanders or other designated representatives determine what constitutes the official use of NTVs.

An NTV may not be used for any unofficial purposes, including, but not limited to, home-to-work transportation, conducting any personal business or activities, or unofficial side trips. For example an NTV may not be used to pick up

personal mail at the CMR or to go out for lunch.

Other uses may be authorized for NTVs used during TDY. Although each service's rules differ, Army rules allow use of an NTV during TDY between place of business or lodging and eating establishments, drugstores, barber-shops, places of worship and similar places required for the comfort and health of the employee and which enhance the continued productive performance of Army business. An NTV may not be used for travel to or from commercial entertainment facilities, even when used during TDY.

Employees caught violating the rules may receive punishment. Although each case is handled individually, civilian personnel can receive a variety of consequences including a 30-day suspension, and military personnel can be disciplined using the Uniform Code of Military Justice or other appropriate adverse administrative action. For more information about the use of government resources contact your supervisor, your local ethics counselor at your supporting Legal Center or the DoD Standards of Conduct Office at [www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/defense\\_ethics/](http://www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/).

## Readiness . . . . .

Continued from page 1

rea, Bosnia, Kosovo — but with Home-basing, they will return to their initial-assignment installations, said Brig. Gen. Sean Byrne, director of Military Policy, G-1.

The six-to-seven-year career mark for ending Home-basing was established because that is the point where the Army's manning needs outside of tactical units significantly increases, Thornton said.

"It's the point where that initial-entry officer has made captain, completed a company command, and the Army may need that officer as a Pentagon staff officer, an instructor at the schoolhouse, or to complete advanced civilian schooling," Thornton said. "The enlisted Soldier will have likely made sergeant by that time and is ready for assignment as a recruiter, drill sergeant or an instructor."

Leader development training, such as the basic and advanced noncommissioned officer courses, and the captain's career course, should not be impacted by Home-basing, as Soldiers will be sent to that training on temporary duty and then return to the installation.

Home-basing is set to start at an undetermined Forces Command installation in division brigade combat teams sometime in the fourth quarter of the current fiscal year. It will eventually include all FORSCOM assignments in the United States and at least two Training and Doctrine Command locations, Byrne said.

Under the second initiative, Unit-Focused Stability, all members of a unit initially arrive at the same time and are locked into that unit for three years.

"Optimally, if you want to build unit cohesion, you keep members of a team together through training, deployment and employment," Thornton said. "This is about building more capable war-fighting units that require less train-up time when alerted for deployment."

## Cav Soldiers . . . . .

Continued from page 1

tional surgery, possibly this month in Baltimore, to reconstruct his leg.

"It's kind of unknown," said his wife, Tatjana Osaer, who is expecting the couple's first child in August. "There are really no guarantees right now."

"The average American will never know the sacrifices that a Soldier makes and a Soldier's family makes each and every day," said Gravens.

"I greatly admire you and respect you for the sacrifice you make by helping your husband, by keeping focused in support-

The Army understands that losses occur in any unit due to medical, administrative, hardship or judicial issues, Thornton said, so there is a plan for an annual package of replacements who would remain with the unit through the remainder of the 36-month unit lifecycle. Individual replacements for key positions will be filled as required and requested by the unit, he said.

A key aspect to Unit-Focused Stability is that replacements coming into the unit will all be initial-entry Soldiers. "Let's say you need to replace a company commander due to a loss," Thornton said. "His replacement will come from within — somebody who has been with the unit at the start of the unit life cycle, somebody like the company executive officer. Then you take the senior platoon leader and make him the XO. The initial-entry replacement comes in and then fills the empty platoon leader position. It works the same way on the enlisted side."

The 172nd Infantry Brigade (Separate), based at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, was the first Army unit to use Unit-Focused Stability when it started the process to become the Army's third Stryker Brigade Combat Team this past summer.

Unit-Focused Stability will take longer to implement across the Army than Home-basing because of operational requirements and the need for coordination with multiple Army organizations for each unit transitioning to the new manning system, Thornton said. Eventually the Army plans to transition one brigade combat team a month, he said.

Both Force Stabilization initiatives should not impact anybody's chances for promotion, Byrne said, as promotions are based upon Army requirements, not unit requirements.

"We are increasing the readiness of the Army through stability and unit cohesion, while providing more predictability to Soldiers and their families," Byrne said.

ing this Army while we're at war," Gravens said to Tatjana. "These are two men to whom we owe our deepest respect."

The attack, their response and their wounds have led both Soldiers to crossroads in their Army careers.

"I want to stay in," said Osaer. "I'll probably reclassify."

"I'm getting out pretty soon because they want me to reclassify, and I don't want to reclassify," said Knox. "I want to stay a scout. So I'm going to get out and go to college."

He expected to be gone long before his fellow Cav Soldiers return to Büdingen in the spring. "I'd like to say 'What's Up' to Apache Troop, 1-1 Cav," said Knox.

## News flash

### Korean service medal

The Defense Department announced Feb. 9 that service members who served in support of the defense of the Republic of Korea July 28, 1954, through the present are now eligible for the Korean Defense Service Medal. Service members must have been assigned, attached or mobilized to units operating in or over the Republic of Korea (and the contiguous water out to 12 nautical miles) for 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days. Others eligible include anyone engaged in actual combat during an armed engagement regardless of the time in the area of eligibility and, anyone wounded or injured in the line of duty and requiring medical evacuation from the area of eligibility. More than 40,000 members of the U.S. armed forces have served in the Republic of Korea or the waters adjacent thereto each year since the signing of the cease-fire agreement in July 1953 which established the Demilitarized Zone. (DoDNEWS)

### Raytheon job search

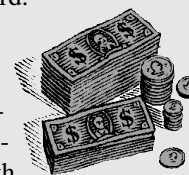
Representatives of the Raytheon Company will be at the Hanau Army Career and Alumni Program center on Pioneer Kaserne Feb. 17 and 20 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. They are in search of individuals interested in applying for jobs as Patriot battery system technicians and Patriot system technicians. For more information browse to [www.Raytheon.com](http://www.Raytheon.com).

### AAFES earns praise

The National Retail Federation awarded the Army and Air Force Exchange Service the "American Spirit Award" for ongoing support to deployed Soldiers around the globe. About 450 AAFES employees are deployed to locations around the world, working at nine stores in Kuwait, 30 in Iraq and 88 unit-run stores serving forward operating bases. "They put their lives on hold ... leave family, comfort and safety behind, expose themselves to danger ... all to take care of American troops," said Maj. Gen. Kathryn Frost, AAFES commander, in accepting the award. "They really deserve this award."

### Did you know?

The earliest a person can start receiving Social Security retirement benefits is age 62. Collecting full retirement benefits depends on one's birth date. People born in 1937 or earlier collect full benefits at age 65. Those born from 1943 to 1954 must wait until age 66 to collect full benefits. People born in 1960 and after aren't eligible for full benefits until age 67. Retiring between the age of 62 and full retirement age reduces benefits a fraction of a percent for each month before full retirement age. For more information about Social Security benefits visit the Social Security website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). (Courtesy of Social Security Online)



### Officer Candidate School boards

The 222nd Base Support Battalion in Baumholder and 414th BSB in Hanau will hold Officer Candidate School boards in March to interview potential OCS candidates for possible referral to the Army's board to be held in May. Soldiers interested in appearing before the Hanau board March 12 should call Sgt. Vershinin at mil 322-8144 or email [filipp.vershinin@104asg.army.mil](mailto:filipp.vershinin@104asg.army.mil). Those wanting to appear before the Baumholder OCS board March 17 should contact Sgt. 1st Class Draught at mil 485-6080 or email [damon.draught@us.army.mil](mailto:damon.draught@us.army.mil). Candidates must have their OCS packets completed and reviewed by their chain of command before the local board is held. Refer to Army Regulation 350-51, U.S. Army Officer Candidate School, online at [www.army.mil/usapa](http://www.army.mil/usapa) (under "Administrative Pubs") for a guide. Call Arthur Cheney at mil 323-3001 for additional information.